

British Columbia

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leaves of Absence

Nov 27: [Bill 30](#) providing up to 27 weeks' unpaid leave for employees who can't work for at least a one-week period due to serious illness or injury took effect. Leave must be taken during a 52-week period and employees must obtain a doctor or nurse practitioner certificate verifying medical need for leave and dates it's required.

Action Point: British Columbia is just one of the many provinces that have changed their sick and long-term illness leave laws since the pandemic. Find out how to implement a legally sound [Sick Leave Compliance Game Plan](#) at your own workplace along with a [summary of the sick leave rules](#) in each part of Canada.

Labour Relations

Dec 19: The Facilities Bargaining Association representing approximately 67,500 health services deliveries personnel ratified a new 4-year agreement with Health Employers Association of BC providing for annual 3% general increases, higher shift premiums and a pair of new health and safety provisions. FBA workers will also receive wage comparability adjustments in response to the 15% wage cuts made in 2004. These are additional increases over and above what British Columbia will provide to the rest of the public sector as part of the 2025 Balanced Measures Mandate.

Employment Benefits

Dec 16: The BCFSA released the Application to [Unlock and Withdraw B.C. Funds Due to Financial Hardship for 2026](#) that pension plan members must complete to get early access to their LIRA or LIR benefits to pay medical expenses, avoid eviction or default, or deal with other financial hardship.

New Laws

Nov 19: The federal Active Transportation Fund is investing more than \$6.3 million to support active transportation improvement and planning projects across British Columbia communities. Active transportation refers to the movement of people or goods powered by human activity and includes walking, cycling and the use of human-powered or hybrid mobility aids such as wheelchairs, scooters, e-bikes, rollerblades, snowshoes, cross-country skis, etc.

Health & Safety

Nov 25: On Oct. 1, 2024, new OHS regulations took effect requiring employers to submit a Notice of Project (NOP) to WorkSafeBC at least 2 weeks before any tower crane work begins. The agency is reporting "good compliance" with the new regulation noting that it received more than 900 Notice of Project-Tower Crane submissions during the year while cautioning that crane risks remain a major concern.

Action Point: Find out [how to prepare for and manage OHS and other government inspections](#) at your workplace.

Workplace Violence

Dec 17: British Columbia's Repeat Violent Offending Intervention Initiative to prevent repeat violence offences seems to be working. Police interactions for all offences involving accused individuals dropped significantly by nearly 1,500 (50%) in the 18 months after being designated for ReVOII. Violent-offence interactions declined even further by 480 (56%) in that same period.

Action Point: Find out how to implement a legally sound and effective [Workplace Violence Prevention Game Plan](#) at your site.

Drugs & Alcohol

Dec 3: British Columbia passed first-of-its-kind legislation, [Bill 24](#), empowering the province to take legal action to hold vaping product manufacturers and wholesalers accountable for public harms resulting from misleading promotion of vaping products. The Bill is patterned on the legislation that paved the way for the recent \$3.6 billion landmark settlement against tobacco companies.

Action Point: Find out how to comply with [workplace smoking laws](#).

Workers' Compensation

Dec 19: WorkSafeBC issued [new guidance](#) to clarify how employers should treat tips and gratuities when calculating and reporting their assessable payroll for purposes of workers' comp. Specifically, the guidance explains the rules governing what makes tips "verifiable."

Action Point: Look up the [2026 workers' compensation premium rates](#) in each part of Canada.

CASES

Termination: Pharmacy Must Pay \$150,000 for Forcing Manager to Resign

After 45 years of service, Jan. 26, 2024, was the last day of work for a store manager of a busy pharmacy in Lillooet. The question: Did she resign or was she fired? The blowup that led to her departure began simmering when new ownership took over and made sweeping changes to longstanding management practices. The new owner frequently reprimanded the manager, sometimes in a raised voice, and stripped away her duties. He also took away her keys and banned her from speaking to customers without supervision. Rock bottom came when the owner told the manager it was time for her to retire and handed her a sheet of blank paper for her to write out her resignation letter. Emotionally shattered, the manager did as she was told. But she later sued for wrongful dismissal, claiming she had been bullied into giving 2 weeks' notice. Citing her long dedication and loyalty to the store and reliance on the income from the job, the British Columbia court ruled that the manager didn't demonstrate the necessary unequivocal intent to resign and that the owner's actions amounted to a dismissal. Result: The owner had to pay \$90,000 notice and \$60,000 in punitive and aggravated damages [[Mayede v Lillooet Pharmacy Ltd. \(Lillooet I.D.A. Pharmacy\)](#), 2025 BCSC 2524 (CanLII), December 19, 2025].

Action Point: An employee's intent to resign must be clear and unambiguous. Simply assuming that an employee who stops working for you has resigned or quit can backfire. If that assumption turns out to be wrong, you face risk of liability for wrongful dismissal. Find out more about the [law of resignation](#) and how to avoid liability for forcing employees to leave.

Workers' Compensation: Worker's Widow Gets Second Chance to Prove Case for Survivor Benefits

A worker forced to retire due to work injuries received a partial permanent functional impairment award in 2011 for loss of range of motion in the right knee, chronic pain, and depression. He died in the hospital of congestive heart failure 7 years later. His widow claimed survivor benefits, contending that the pain and depression contributed to the heart disease that killed him by limiting his ability to exercise and causing him to gain weight. The Board denied the widow's claim and the WCAT rejected her appeal. But the BC court ruled that the WCAT's analysis of the link among all of the various injuries and conditions was "fundamentally flawed" and sent the case back down for redetermination [[Macovei v British Columbia \(Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal\)](#)], 2025 BCSC 2365 (CanLII), December 2, 2025].